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SUBJECT: GA COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY REVIEW - MEETING
WITH FACILITATOR

REF: USUN 00469

¶1. (U) Summary. The "Facilitator" for the General Assembly Counter-terrorism Strategy Review told Amb. Wolff that he expects the September review will result in adoption of a resolution re-committing but not re-opening the Strategy. He summarized the views expressed during a series of consultations with member states "most interested" in the CT Strategy and concluded that while he thought a satisfactory outcome could be achieved at the review, he is concerned that the "Victims" conference could detract from a positive UN CT Strategy review. End Summary

¶2. (U) Amb Wolff met on June 11 with Guatemalan Permanent Representative Gert Rosenthal, Facilitator for the General Assembly review of the GA Counter-terrorism Strategy (A/60/288) which is scheduled to take place on September 4. Rosenthal reported that he is conducting consultations with the most interested delegations to assess views on the outcome of the review. Based on these discussions, he does not expect delegations to reopen the Strategy. The most likely result will be a resolution reaffirming the Strategy and noting activities to implement it.

¶3. (U) Rosenthal said that states with whom he spoke emphasized the importance of clarifying the respective roles of the Secretariat and the GA in the process. Some queried why the Secretariat was deciding what working groups should be established and how often states should receive reports on the groups activities? Another theme raised in the contacts was the relationship between GA Strategy implementation and the Security Council's counter-terrorism activities.

¶4. (U) Amb. Wolff noted that the Strategy had been a difficult but successful negotiation. The consensus achieved is fragile and the Strategy should not be re-opened. GA Resolution 60/288 represents a good framework for concrete actions and that should be the focus of the next phase of General Assembly work. He said that the new Director of the Security Council Counter-terrorism Executive Directorate had been urged to engage the entire membership and has done so.

¶5. (U) Commenting on complaints from some delegations that the Secretariat is acting without sufficient guidance, Rosenthal said that there may be need for a better system of consultation between the Secretariat and GA members. He reported that the Islamic group has been particularly critical of the "Radicalization" Working Group mandate, which they claim targets Islam. He said the solution might lie in regular (3-4 times/yr.) briefings by the Chairman of the Task Force (UN ASG Robert Orr). Wolff agreed that attempts by some member states to micromanage the Strategy implementation process could create a situation which would hamper progress. He asked Rosenthal about his expectations for the review. Rosenthal responded that there may be some difficulty in reconciling views but he hopes the GA will adopt a resolution that: reaffirms the Strategy, welcomes or endorses the Secretary General's Report on Strategy implementation (not yet released), indicates what has been and remains to be

achieved, renews the mandate until 2010 and recommends next steps.

¶6. (SBU) Rosenthal also referred to the "Victims" meeting proposed to be held at UN headquarters on September 2-3 to bring together victims of terrorism. He noted that while the proposal by the Secretary-General appears to be a positive undertaking, it presents some complex and controversial questions. The UK is funding an expert to assist with arrangements for the meeting. States continue to press for details. Who will be invited? What criteria will be applied to determine participants? What constitutes a victim of international terrorism? Since participants will not be representatives of governments, member states will not be responsible for words or actions of participants. He noted, for example, that self-identified Israeli or Palestinian victims could create a polarized atmosphere which would have a negative effect on the situation in the Middle East as well as on UN efforts to foster co-operation among states in the negotiation of the Strategy review outcome. Rosenthal, an experienced UN diplomat, lamented that the victims conference, which would be largely run by NGO representatives, could become quite controversial and spin out of control. While there is widespread support among states for the victims of terrorism, some states with whom he has consulted expressed concern at the potential for politicization of the victims conference and its impact on the process.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: Rosenthal's comments require serious reflection. As the highest profile UN Counter-terrorism event since the Strategy's adoption, the victims meeting would provide a platform not only for the Cubans and

Venezuelans to parade the families of victims of the terrorist bombing they allege was perpetrated by Posada-Carrilles but also for enemies of Israel to gain sympathy for their anti-Israeli activities by identifying victims of Israel's alleged "state terrorism". Comments at the May informal consultations (USUN 00469, para 6) lend credence to Rosenthal's concerns. Cuba, Venezuela and Iran argued that the absence of an agreed definition of terrorism would make it difficult to identify victims of terrorism and could lead to "political manipulation." They asked whether States could bring "victims" and whether States would be limited in the number of victims they could bring. In view of those remarks, and Amb. Rosenthal's cautionary comments, and our own assessment that such a meeting at the UN is likely to turn into an anti-Israel rally, USUN urges Department to re-consider whether it is advisable to convene the victims conference. End Comment.
Khalilzad